

## **Hard work still to come on cutting emissions Tory says city's on track**

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### **Body**

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Toronto is making progress on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and is halfway to its 2030 target of a 65 per cent reduction from 1990 levels, the city announced Wednesday. But advocates say now is the time for doubling down as the hardest work is still ahead.

Emissions were 33 per cent lower in 2016 than in 1990, according to the greenhouse gas emissions inventory, which comprises data from energy use in buildings, vehicles, waste and industry. It takes about two years to collect and verify data for the inventory, which is why it's just being released now.

It's good news, said Julia Langer, CEO of the Atmospheric Fund, an arm's length city agency that co-developed the Transform TO climate change plan.

"The real key is that we are making strides to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," she said, adding it's amazing given how much the city has grown since 1990.

"But we can't really rest on our laurels because a huge chunk of that 33 per cent reduction was because of the (provincial) coal phaseout."

Buildings accounted for 45 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in Toronto in 2016, transportation 35 per cent (80 per cent of that from personal vehicles) and waste 20 per cent.

Part of the 2016 reduction, Langer said, was also due to an unseasonably warm winter when people used less heat.

Now, "we have to redouble the pace," in order to meet the 2030 target and invest in the "harder things" such as energy efficiency in older buildings and electrification of transportation.

"We have momentum to build on but we have to pick up the pace," she said.

The new numbers put Toronto ahead of cities such as Vancouver (9 per cent reduction since 1990) and London, England (25 per cent reduction), according to a recent report from the Atmospheric Fund.

"This latest inventory shows we're on track," said Mayor John Tory in a city news release.

"We'll build on this momentum through the Transform TO Climate Action Strategy to transform how we live, build and travel to meet our long-term targets."

Linda Swanston, program manager, policy and research, with the city's environment and energy division, said the province's phaseout of coal-fired electricity did play a "huge" part in the city meeting the reduction targets.

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But city efforts such as building energy efficiency programs and the installation of methane capture facilities at landfills also contributed, she said.

Heather Marshall, campaigns director with the non-profit group, Toronto Environmental Alliance, said the city "should be proud of what's been accomplished so far."

Reaching the 2030 target however, "is going to require much deeper actions and a stronger investment strategy" in the long-term to tackle big projects like retrofitting all old buildings and getting the city off fossil fuels.

"The easier stuff has been done and that's also been the cheaper stuff," she said. "If we want to keep up and meet our next big target, city council must fund Transform TO this year and every continuing year, so that we can actually meet those 2030 targets."

The city also needs to start looking at other sources of funding, Marshall added, citing an example from Portland, Oregon, where a small surcharge on billion-dollar businesses goes toward climate change.

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